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Fox Valley Division  
Midwest Region - NMRA  
P.O. Box 1535  
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-1535

# The Semaphore

Fox Valley Division • MWR • NMRA

## February Meeting

The February meeting will be held at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights. Jim Singer will be giving a clinic on Railroad Oddities (no, he won't be talking about Walter Radke's layout, or mine either). The meeting will start at 1:30pm.

*Hope to see you there!*

## This Month's Contest

The February contest theme will be "Builder's Choice - Completed Project," and we're leaving it wide open! Have you got a finished project that you've been waiting to enter, but the topic's never right? Well, this is the perfect time. Structure, engine, diorama, boxcar, you literally name it! This contest will probably be the most difficult to judge, but also promises to be the most interesting. Hope to see you and your project there!

## Midwest Region Spring convention

Remember, the Midwest Region Spring convention will be held in Waupaca, Wisconsin on May 9 - 11. With operating sessions on Friday night, clinics on Friday night and Saturday morning, a tour of the Waupaca Foundry Friday afternoon. There will be additional layout tours Saturday and Sunday afternoon, and the banquet will be on Saturday night.

For more information, refer to The Superintendent's Report in the January *Semaphore*, or go to the convention Website,

[www.mwr-nmra.org/WaupacaRails2008/Home.htm](http://www.mwr-nmra.org/WaupacaRails2008/Home.htm). For hotel information, go to [www.bestwesternwaupaca.com](http://www.bestwesternwaupaca.com).

*Hope you can attend!*

## December Clinic - Eastern European Railroads

For those of you who couldn't attend the December meeting, David Leider was kind enough to submit his clinic for this

## Volunteers Needed for High Wheeler!

**High Wheeler is Next Month!** Walter Radtke, our Ways and Means Trainmaster, is again in charge of the event, and needs more help than ever! This is the 30th anniversary of High Wheeler, and there are some special things going on to make this one to celebrate. So we need your help: Contact Walter (847-255-2977, or [wagx2@email.com](mailto:wagx2@email.com)) and show some support for the event that gives us the funds to finance our trips to Trainfest® and all the other field trips we go on!

**We Need Your Help to make High Wheeler a success!  
Give Walter a call!**

# This Year's Remaining Events

**February 17, 2008**  
**1:30pm, Gary Morava Center**  
Clinic – Jim Singer, Railroad Oddities  
Contest - Finished Project – your choice

**March 15-16, 2008**  
**9:00am-5:00pm, High Wheeler**  
No Clinic, No Contest

**April 20, 2008**  
**1:00pm, Gary Morava Center**  
**Annual Business Meeting**  
Clinic – Boy, is my thumb green  
Contest - Unfinished Project – your choice

**May 25, 2008**  
**1:30pm**  
**Layout tours (Details TBD)**  
No Clinic  
No Contest

**Summer, 2008**  
**Possible Field Trip**  
– Details to be announced

## Find the Secret Word Contest

Be one of the first to bring in your mailed-out *Semaphore*, with the secret word circled, to the February meeting and you will receive a prize. Words inside this text box are excluded.

The secret word for this month is: "Warsaw"

The January word was found by: Frank Cole

month's issue of the *Semaphore*.

## Eastern European Railroads

I guess you could call this how "I spent my summer vacation". I had the occasion to visit my in-laws in Lithuania. They asked what I wanted to see, so naturally I said lots of trains. They were kind enough to drive me all over the country looking at trains as we visited other tourist stops and relatives. My brother-in law, Valdas, also arranged a tour of the yard and facilities of the Latvian railroad in Daugavpils, Latvia.



Passenger Train - Valdas

Taking photos of trains in the main stations is strictly prohibited, enforced by uniformed soldiers sporting machine guns. My wife was not about to let that stop us, so we went in search of someone to ask permission of. As far as I could tell, railfanning is unknown in Lithuania. We got blank stares and were usually pushed off to the next person in charge. Other times we were flatly told no. This did not stop my wife, who simply asked another person until she found someone who said yes.

In our quest, I got to see the CTC board, visit shop buildings and see a lot of great equipment, too bad I couldn't photograph it. We finally got permission to visit the engine shop in Klaipeda. (Watch for trains, don't go in any buildings, but photograph anything

you want). Another permission slip was required in Villnius.



Engine 6339

Some history- they began building the railroad in 1859. It was part of a line that connected tsarist Russia's railroad in St. Petersburg with Warsaw. The first train arrived from Daugavpils to Lithuania's capital, Villnius in 1860. Regular traffic from St. Petersburg to Warsaw began in 1862. The railroads were operated as part of the Soviet Union until independence in 1990. Today they are state owned, although the railroads in Estonia, two countries north, are operated by a consortium put together by Ed Burkhardt of WC fame.



Latvia express

Under state control, traffic has increased tremendously, from 36.65 million tons in 2002 to 50.225 in 2006. Instead of going north-south, between St. Petersburg and Warsaw, it goes east-west, from Belarus and

## Estate Sale

- John Hetreed is sponsoring an estate sale of the HO scale model railroad item
  - of the late Bill Fisher who was a NMRA member of the Fox Valley Division.
  - The sale will be held on April 5, 2008 at The Holiday Inn Express, 2120 South Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, from 10:00am to 4:00pm.
  - Over 1,500 items are available; many are new and in the original packaging.
- Contact [johnhetreed@wowway.com](mailto:johnhetreed@wowway.com)

Russia, to Lithuania on the Baltic Sea. Car ferries and ships complete the journey to northern Europe. Another route is used to get to Warsaw, a very important gateway to Germany and the west.

## Tapes Available From Our Library

Just a reminder that we have VHS tapes available for loan. Look for them by the front table of our meeting room.



latvian engine 3.tiff



Anyksciai narrow gauge

## Hints, Tips, and Innovations

**Rick Saviano**  
Publications Trainmaster /  
Membership Trainmaster

This month's contest and next month's contest brings up a very interesting question: Are model railroad projects ever "finished?" I must confess that most of my projects are "waiting for the finishing touches." I've got a good 10-20 circuit blocks to add to the layout (No funding for DCC decoders for all my Z engines - and no time for the microsurgery to install them), and it seems I keep changing the locations of

**FREE!!!**  
3 Fluorescent light fixtures 8' long with 2 bulbs each. Bulbs (6) included. You provide the transportation. Contact Tim Kleimeyer at 847-426-4732 if interested.

my industries right before finalizing the exact building size and shape. Add to that the frustration of having many of my inspirations change before I can get a good photo to model after.

My favorite unfinished project, for example, is the Dad's Root Beer Building, that used to be a prominent landmark off the Kennedy Expressway. I had to sneak on railroad property to get the shots I needed, and had the misfortune to use "questionable" film to take the picture (any of you amateur photographers remember Eastman 5247? The transparencies were not color stable). The challenge for modeling Dad's Root Beer is the Neon signs: One billboard sized sign, one roof sign, and four smokestack signs that each blink vertically: "Dad's" - "Root", Beer." The thing that made it so appealing was the shape, both horizontally and vertically: It ran parallel to a north-south street and "bent" around a tower for it's siding, parallel to the Northwestern tracks. The siding was elevated because the tracks went over the street with one of those ubiquitous Chicago viaducts. My old layout had the perfect location for the building. My new layout, well, let's just say I'm glad I didn't cement the tower to the two other parts of the building; I may have to change the angle.

I actually don't feel too bad about having this as an unfinished project. The prototype itself was an unfinished project: It started out as part of the Bowman Dairy, cow milking stalls and all. Needless to say, anyone who drives the Kennedy nowadays will probably not recognize the building as either of its previous incarnations: the signs are down, the smokestack is gone, and it got turned into townhouses!

So a few words of warning to you all: If you see something you want to model, take pictures as soon as possible! I still regret not taking pictures of the Frerk and Sons Concrete Casket sign, and the Cooper - Lamps of Distinction tower is being stripped of its distinctive lettering.

### Fox Valley Division Board of Directors

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**Location for General Meetings**

General meetings of the Fox Valley Division are held at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights (See map at right).

**Why Do You Get This Newsletter?**

You are a member of the National Model Railroad Association, or one of our "courtesy" recipients of the *Semaphore*. Thank you for joining a group of people interested in and enjoying the Model Railroading hobby. The NMRA is divided into Regions and Divisions. You live in the Midwest Region and the Fox Valley Division.

The Fox Valley Division has around two hundred members and you are one of them. Membership in the Fox Valley Division costs you NOTHING beyond your national membership. As a matter of fact, most times we give you things. How can we do that? In March each year, we hold a train show at Harper College in Palatine. The proceeds from the show support our activities throughout the year.

If you are interested in learning more about model railroading you can come to our meetings and sign up for our events. There you will meet and hear from people who want to share their knowledge of the hobby. We meet once a month at the Gary Morava Fieldhouse in Prospect Heights. Each year (our year runs from September through May) the *Semaphore* is mailed to the entire membership.

*Welcome to the Fox Valley Division!*



**Next Meeting: January 17, 2008  
1:30pm, Gary Morava Center**

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Contest - Finished Project – your choice



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